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**MCREE TOWN - SOUTH  
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

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Prepared for  
**CITY of ST. LOUIS**

September 20, 2001

**DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES®**

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## **DESCRIPTION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN AND AREA**

The McRee Town South Neighborhood Planning Area (the "Neighborhood Area"), is generally bounded by Folsom Avenue on the north, 39<sup>th</sup> Street on the east, Lafayette Avenue on the south, and Vandeventer Avenue on the west (see Exhibit 1). The Neighborhood Area, which contains approximately 90 acres of land (including street rights-of-way), represents one of four neighborhoods that comprise a larger planning area known as the Garden District<sup>1</sup>. Legally, the Neighborhood Area can be described as a tract of land containing approximately 90 acres (including rights-of-way) incorporating the following City Blocks located in the City of St. Louis, Missouri, 4961, 4962, 4963, 4964, 4969, 4970, 4971, 4972, 4974, 5197, 5438, 5441, 5442, and 5445; and specifically described as follows.

Beginning at the intersection of the centerline of 39<sup>th</sup> Street with the southern line of Lafayette Avenue, west along the southern line of Lafayette Avenue to the centerline of Vandeventer Avenue, generally northeast along the centerline of Vandeventer Avenue to the centerline of Tower Grove Avenue, south along the centerline of Tower Grove Avenue to the centerline of Folsom Avenue, east along the centerline of Folsom Avenue to the centerline of 39<sup>th</sup> Street, south along the centerline of 39<sup>th</sup> Street to the southern line of Lafayette Avenue, the point of origin.

## **HISTORY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD**

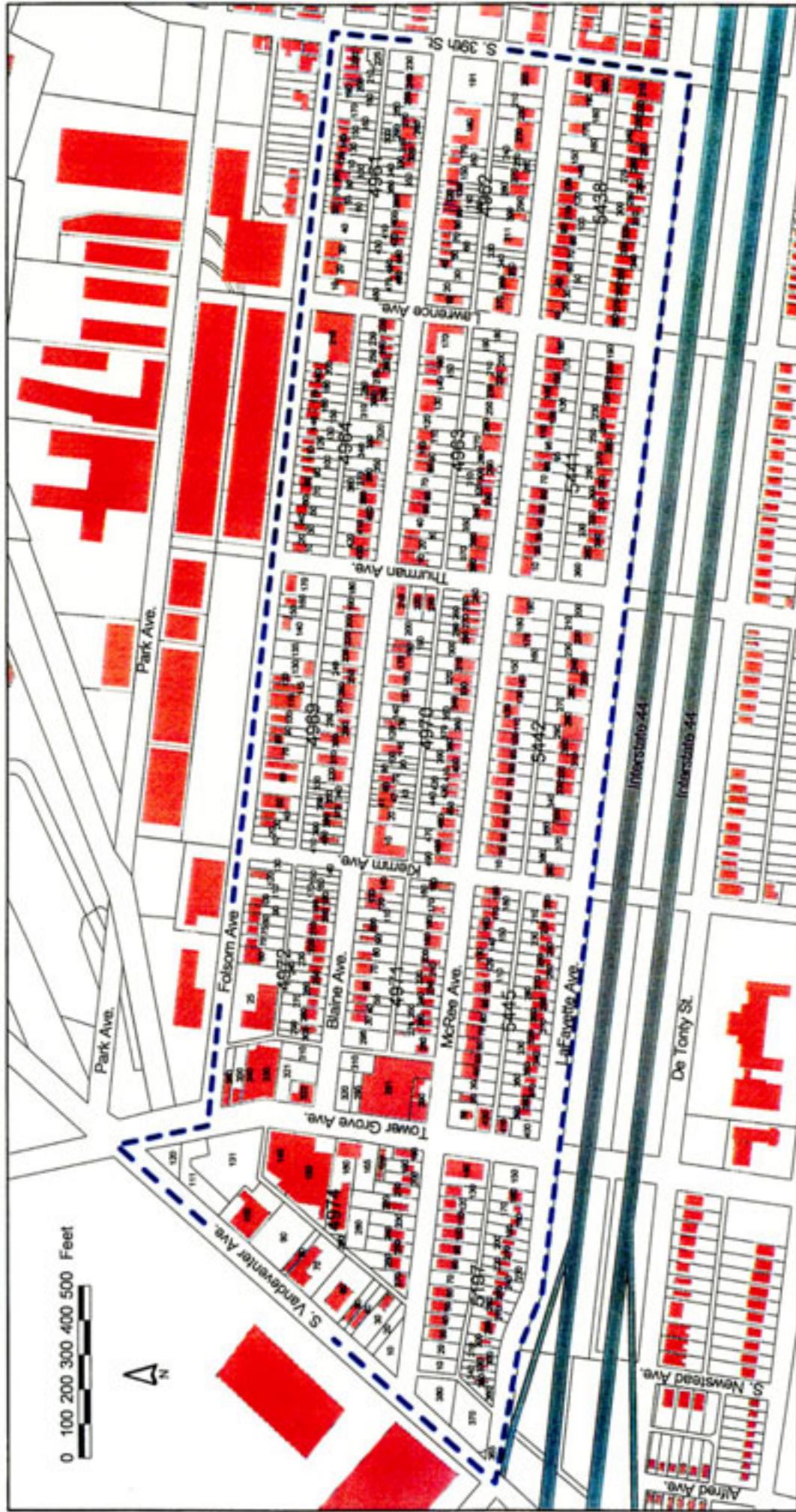
The McRee Town Neighborhood was originally developed as Dundee Place by out-of-town developers in the early 1890's. The developers found this area attractive because of the newly constructed Grand Avenue Bridge, which spanned the existing railroad tracks and paved the way for the arrival of southbound streetcars on Grand Avenue. With the new bridge in place, the developers targeted this location as an area that would attract middle-class homeowners

In 1895, just a few short years after the construction of many new homes, the developers sold off a large tract of land to Liggett & Myers, which constructed (at the time) the world's largest

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the McRee Town neighborhood, the Garden District includes the Shaw, Southwest Garden and Tiffany neighborhoods. The Garden District is generally bounded by Grand Avenue to the east, Magnolia Avenue to the south, Kingshighway Blvd and Vandeventer Avenue to the West, and Folsom Avenue to the north.





# McRee Town - South Neighborhood Plan City Blocks and Parcels

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tobacco factory, thereby, transforming the character of the neighborhood from middle to working-class.

After many decades as a stable community, the neighborhood experienced a downturn in the 1960's. Due to the construction of Interstate 44, McRee Town was now located north of the interstate and became increasingly isolated from the adjoining neighborhoods south of the interstate. Additionally, Urban Renewal efforts and the construction of Highway 40 through Mill Creek began to displace many residents, which created overcrowding conditions in the McRee Town Neighborhood.

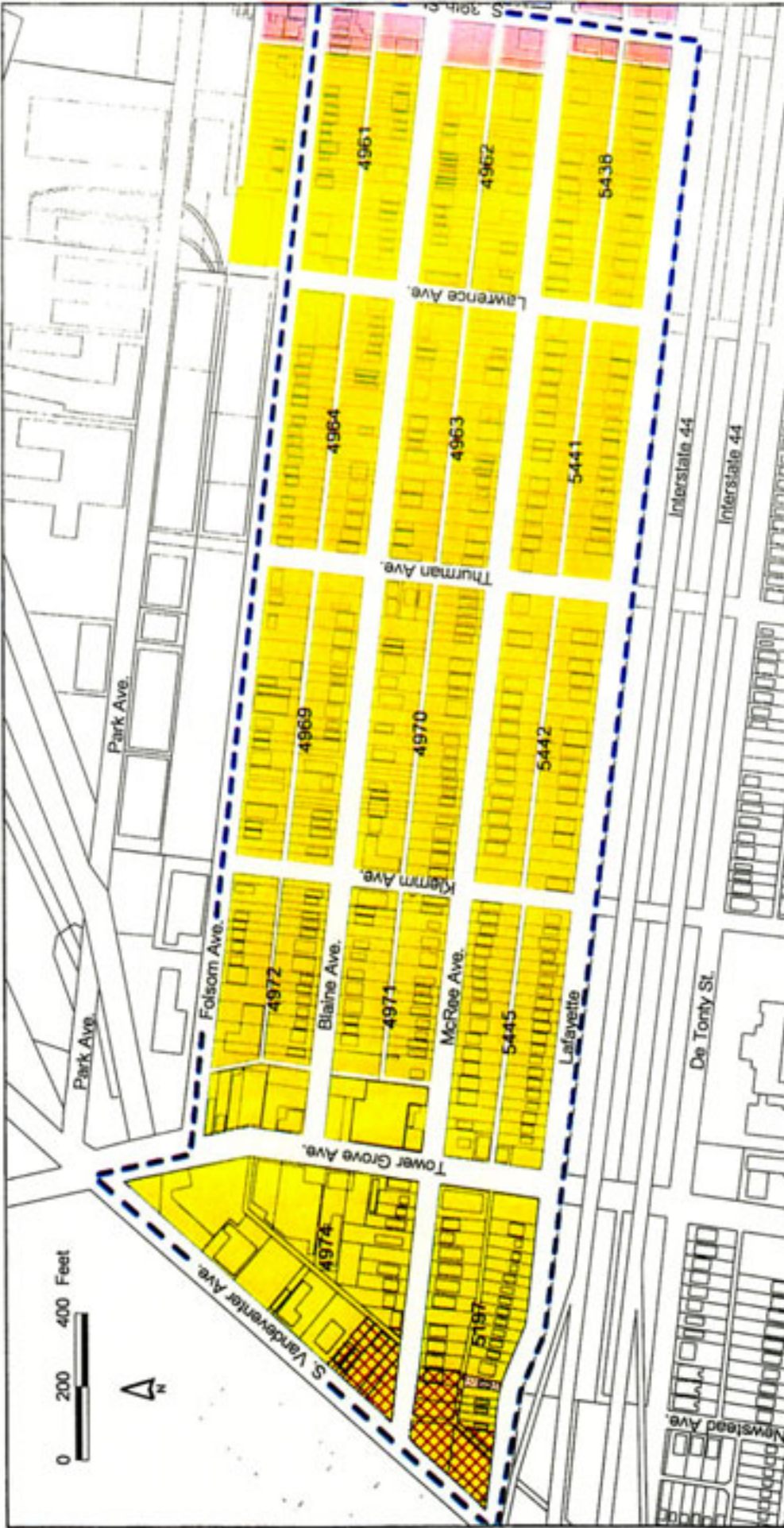
Since 1970, the population within the Neighborhood Area is estimated to have decreased by more than 30% and the physical condition of the housing stock has deteriorated significantly. The total number of residential units decreased by 25% and the vacancy rate has increased from 4% to over 32%.

## **PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS**

In an attempt to address the decline of the McRee Town neighborhood, the Samuel McRee Redevelopment Corporation was formed in the early 1980's and a Chapter 353 Redevelopment Plan was approved by the Board of Aldermen in March of 1983 (Ordinance 58803). The Samuel McRee (I-44) Redevelopment Plan encompassed the same geographic area as the proposed McRee Town South Neighborhood Area (see Exhibit 2) with the exception of development along the west side of 39<sup>th</sup> Street and a half-block north of Folsom Avenue between Lawrence Avenue and 39<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>2</sup> The Samuel McRee Redevelopment Plan essentially called for the conservation and revitalization of existing residential and commercial development and relied heavily on existing owners to invest in the rehabilitation of their properties. In addition the plan recognized the need for additional owner-occupancy residential units within the area.

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<sup>2</sup> The Balance of the proposed McRee Town Neighborhood Area along the western side of 39<sup>th</sup> Street is contained in the Midtown Medical Center Neighborhood Area. The Redevelopment Plan for the Midtown Medical Center was approved by the Board of Aldermen in April of 1973 (Ordinance 57588).



# McRee Town - South Neighborhood Plan

## Existing Redevelopment Areas

- Vandeventer/McRee Redevelopment Area
- 4351 Lafayette Avenue Redevelopment Area
- Samuel McRee (I-44) Redevelopment Area
- Midtown Medical Center Redevelopment Area
- Planning Area

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EXHIBIT 2

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The Samuel McRee (I-44) Redevelopment Plan has clearly not realized its goal of revitalizing the McRee Town neighborhood. To date, very few residential units have been rehabilitated and no new residential construction has occurred. One new warehouse/office building was constructed in 1997 at 1542 Vandeventer. Most of the commercial establishments in the Neighborhood Area have been abandoned since the approval of the Samuel McRee Redevelopment Plan. Since that plan was approved in 1983, over 10% of the buildings in the Neighborhood Area have been demolished. In addition, as indicated by the following table, the condition of the buildings within the Neighborhood Area have become significantly worse. It is important to note the nearly 20 percentage point increase in the percent of buildings that are vacant or dilapidated.

**Table 1**  
**CONDITION OF BUILDINGS**  
**McRee Town South Neighborhood Area**

	<b>Minor Repairs Required (Good)</b>	<b>Moderate Repairs Required (Fair)</b>	<b>Major Repairs Required (Poor)</b>	<b>Vacant &amp; Boarded</b>	<b>Dilapidated</b>
<b>1983</b>	11%	48%	33%	7%	1%
<b>Current</b>	8%	36%	30%	23%	3%
<b>Change</b>	-3%	-12%	-3%	+16%	+2%

Source: Development Strategies and Booker Associates (Samuel McRee (I-44) Redevelopment Plan).

In 1989 a Chapter 100 redevelopment plan known as the "Vandeventer/McRee Plan" was approved (Ordinance 61683) for a 1.9-acre area located near the intersection of Lafayette Avenue and Vandeventer Avenue. The plan called for this corner to be redeveloped for commercial or residential uses permitted by the "G" Local Commercial and Office District. To date, no new development has occurred and the land within the proposed Neighborhood Area is currently for sale.



Finally, a Chapter 99 redevelopment plan was approved in 1997 (ordinance 64022) for a single lot occupied by a two-family dwelling located at 4351 Lafayette Avenue. The building is now vacant and boarded up.

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

In 1997, the Missouri Botanical Garden asked the residents of the Garden District, which includes Shaw, Tiffany, McRee Town and Southwest Garden neighborhoods, if they would participate in a community based planning process (see Exhibit 3). The Missouri Botanical Garden was joined in this effort by other stakeholders in the neighborhood – Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital, The William T. Kemper Foundation, Firststar Bank, Willert Home Products, Southwest Bank and others, who provided the funding to engage a team of urban planning specialist to guide the residents of the neighborhoods through a community planning process. The Missouri Botanical Garden raised more than \$130,000 to support and pay the team.

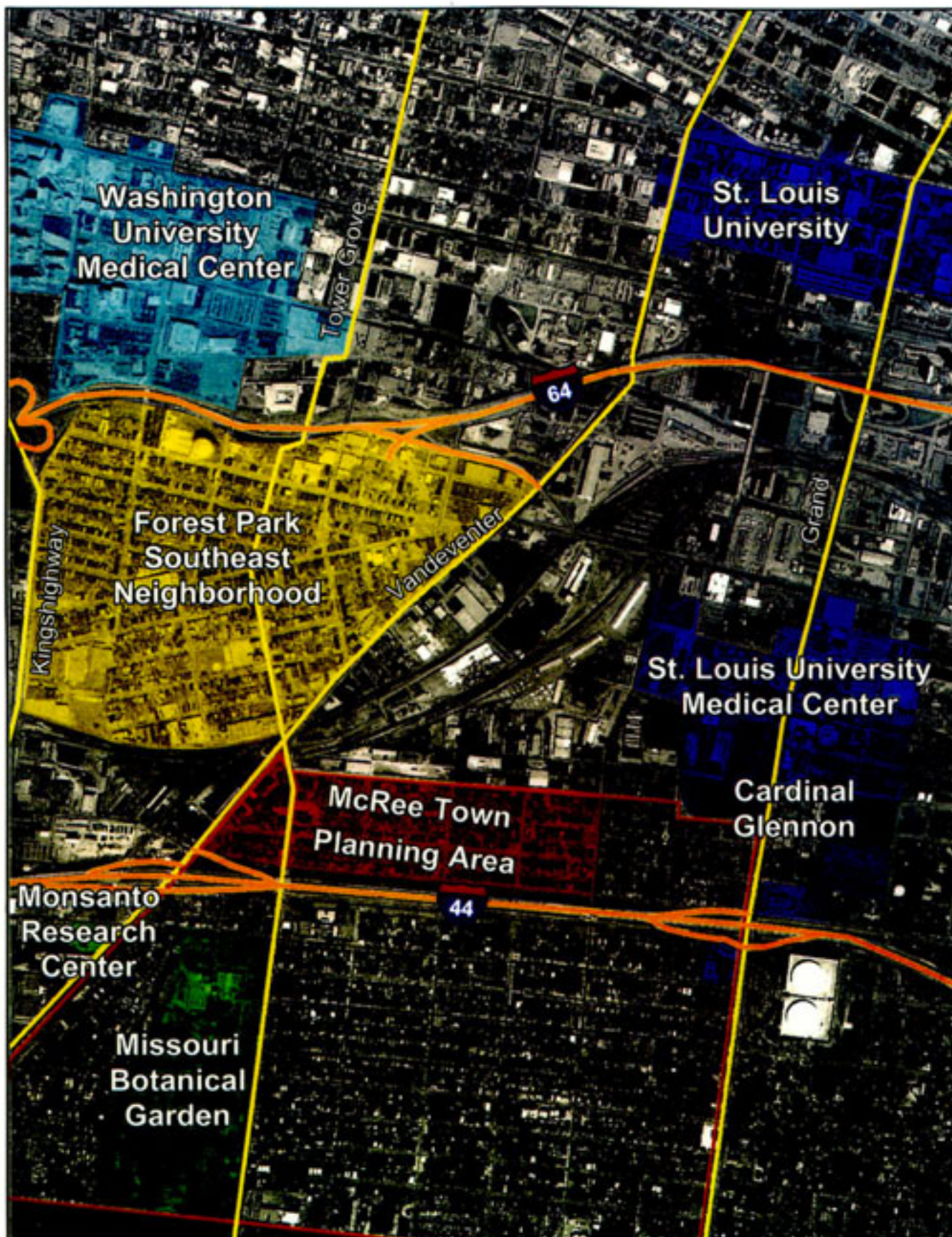
During the following months a Steering Committee was established which had representation from the four neighborhoods as initial participants in the community based planning process. This committee quickly grew to more than 100. The policy established was that no one who wished to participate in the planning process would be turned away.

The planning specialists engaged also sought out the comments and recommendations of local business, religious organizations, block units and others to assist in the overall community based planning process. The team also met with focus groups, neighborhood organizations and community organizations several times a week to seek their views and input.

The results of the planning process was a conceptual plan for the revitalization of the McRee Town South Planning Area, as well as for strengthening other neighborhoods in the Garden District.

The process also yielded the Garden District Commission that was formed for the purpose of implementing the plan. The Garden District Commission has a broad representation of residents who reside in the four neighborhoods which comprise the Garden District.





McRee Town -- South  
Neighborhood Plan  
Development Context

- Garden District
- Interstate Highway
- Major Road

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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Exhibit 3



From the planning process, the revitalization of the McRee Town neighborhood, which coincides with the Neighborhood Area, was identified by the residents and stakeholders as the number one priority. Although the plan discussed the desire to encourage conservation and renovation within McRee Town, it also recognized the importance to the entire Garden District of creating significant new development opportunities within McRee Town, especially to the east of Thurman Avenue.

Throughout the planning process frequent meetings were held with the residents of the McRee Town neighborhood, as well as the Garden District. Neighborhood resident committees were formed to focus on specific issues. Committees that were formed include a Beautification Committee, an Education Committee, an Ad-Hoc Committee on Neighborhood Conditions, and a Property Affairs Committee. The Garden District reports provided in Appendix I provide additional information about the community involvement process.

The final plan for the neighborhood was presented to the neighborhood and approved on August 14, 2001.

The St. Louis Planning & Urban Design Agency reviewed and provided comments on the Neighborhood Plan throughout the planning process. (see pages 12 & 13 of the "First Year Report" provided in Appendix I)

## **NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHICS**

The 2000 census reported a total population of 1,818 people living in the McRee Town South Neighborhood Area. This represents nearly a 44% decline in population from the 1970 census of 3,238.

The majority of the population of the Neighborhood Area are female.

	<u>Total Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male Population	777	42.74%
Female Population	1041	57.26%

The racial characteristics of the Neighborhood Area are as follows:

African American	1,625	89.38%
White	124	6.82%
Other	<u>69</u>	<u>3.80%</u>
Totals	1,818	100%

Median family income for the Neighborhood Area in 1990 was \$10,652, which was significantly below that for the City (\$24,274) and the metropolitan area (\$38,146) in general.

The 1990 percentage of families below the poverty level was considerably higher in the Neighborhood Area (53%) than that in the City of St. Louis (20.6%).

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

Between 1970 and 1990, the Neighborhood Area lost 172 housing units, representing a 13 percent decline. It is estimated that the number of housing units declined by more than 14% during the 1990's\*

The vacancy rate in the Neighborhood Area has also increased dramatically from 9% in 1970 to more than 34% in 2000. Illustrating both a loss of housing units and an increase in vacant units, these figures document the trends toward neighborhood depopulation and loss of residential cohesion and context.

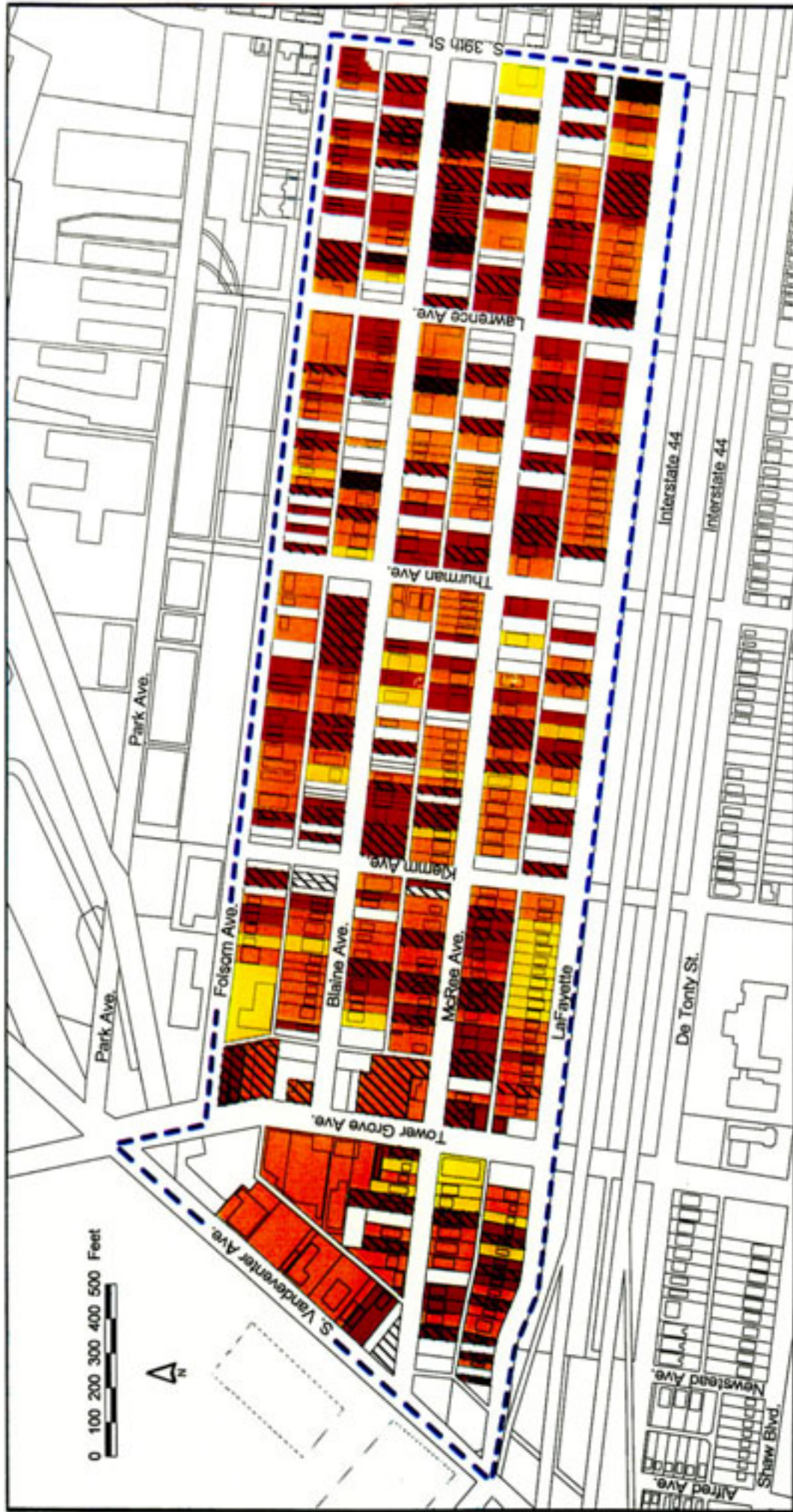
#### **Housing Occupancy:**

Occupied Housing units	539	65.41%
Vacant Housing Units	<u>285</u>	<u>34.59%</u>
Total Housing units	824	100%

There are currently 404 residential structures containing a total of 1,009 residential units within the Neighborhood Area. However, it is estimated that over 26% of the existing structures and over 32% of the existing units are currently vacant. In addition, nearly 56% of the structures and over 56% of the units are either dilapidated or in poor condition (see Exhibit 4).

\* 2000 census information was not yet available for a number of categories





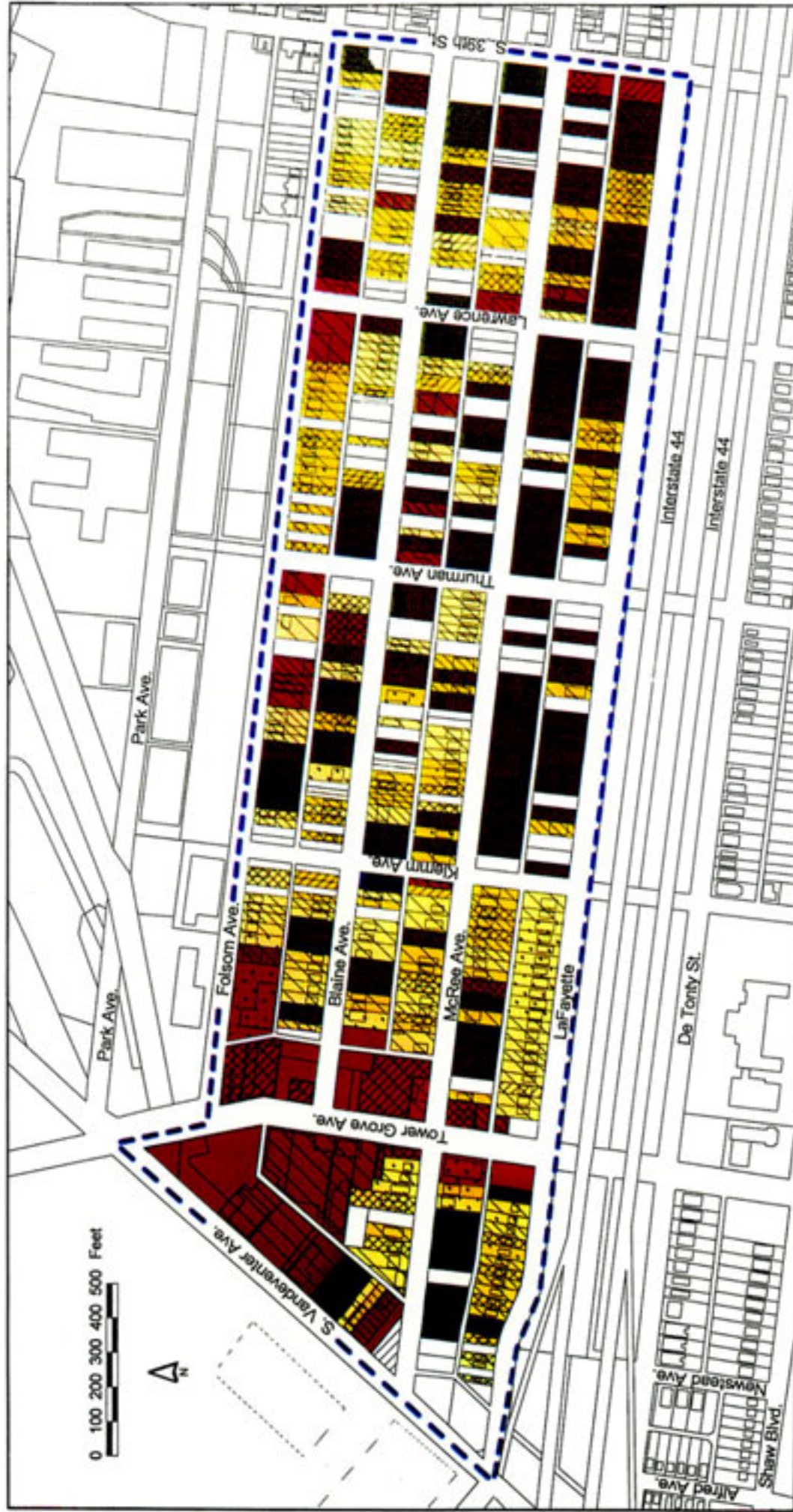
# McRee Town - South Neighborhood Plan Building Conditions



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# McRee Town - South Neighborhood Plan Existing Land Use

EXHIBIT 5

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Within the Neighborhood Area, nearly 13% of the units are single-family, 26% of the units are in two-family duplexes, with the remaining 61% of the units within multi-family units or mixed commercial and residential occupancy structures. Of the multi-family units, nearly 77% are housed in 3 to 4 unit structures (see Exhibit 5).

Roughly 14% of the units in the Neighborhood Area are owner-occupied. Nearly 61% of the existing detached structures are owner-occupied, whereas 34% of the units in two-family structures are owner-occupied, and only 3% of the units in multi-family structures are owner-occupied.

Finally, the extensive transient and sub-standard nature of the residential units within the Neighborhood Area is reflected in the fact that only 21% of the structures and 8% of the units are owner-occupied and classified as being in either fair or good condition.

### **KNOWN EXISTENCE OF PROPOSED EXPANSIONS BY BUSINESS AND/OR INDUSTRY**

There are a few substantial businesses located within the Neighborhood Area. Specifically, Kasco Corporation, Hoffman Brothers Heating & Cooling, B&C Machine Company, Moore Research and Martin Printing. Each of these businesses were unsure if they expected to hire additional employees or make capital improvements within the next 12-18 months.

However, a potentially negative impact may come from Kasco Corp. Kasco currently employs 260 people and is owned by a Florida firm. Kasco's future as an ongoing business is questionable given their business continues to lose money and market share.

Willert Home Products, located adjacent to the Neighborhood Area employs approximately 380 people. Willert manufactures over hundreds of different home products including moth balls, sponges and incense to name a few. Although Willert is one of the largest employers in the area, they also reported no plans to add additional employees or make capital investments over the next 12-18 months.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD VISION AND GOALS**

Given the failure of the various redevelopment plans to provide the desired revitalization of the Neighborhood Area, it is clear that greater emphasis needs to be placed on site consolidation and new construction of residences intended for owner-occupancy. Therefore,

to the northeast. Finally, the Missouri Botanical Garden is located immediately south of the Neighborhood Area.

The following goals have been established for the Neighborhood Area:

1. Assemble land to create new opportunities for investment in the area.
2. Retain and reinforce existing owner-occupied residential units where feasible.
3. Create opportunities for new owner-occupied single-family residential units (attached and detached).
4. Incorporate a component of affordable housing for existing and new residents.
5. Provide an opportunity for new elderly housing.
6. Retain and reinforce existing viable businesses.
7. Create opportunities for the construction of new office and research & development facilities in the western portion of the Neighborhood Area.
8. Enhance the visual image of the Neighborhood Area.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD OBJECTIVES & STRATEGY**

To accomplish the preceding goals, this Neighborhood Plan proposes the planning strategy outlined below:

1. **Reinforce Existing Residential Owner Occupancy-** There are several concentrations of owner-occupied structures located in the Neighborhood Area between Thurman Avenue on the east and Tower Grove Avenue on the west. These structures should be retained and rehabilitated where economically feasible. If economically feasible, other non-owner occupied residential structures in this area could be acquired for rehabilitation for owner occupancy as well.
2. **Create Opportunities for New Residential Owner-Occupied Development-** Significant deterioration and abandonment of existing residential structures has occurred within the Neighborhood Area. It is proposed that these structures be removed and replaced with new single-family, owner-occupied units to the east of Thurman, where total clearance and all new construction is proposed. New owner-occupied single-family and duplex units will be constructed on an infill basis between Thurman Avenue and Tower Grove Avenue to complement viable owner-occupied structures to remain.



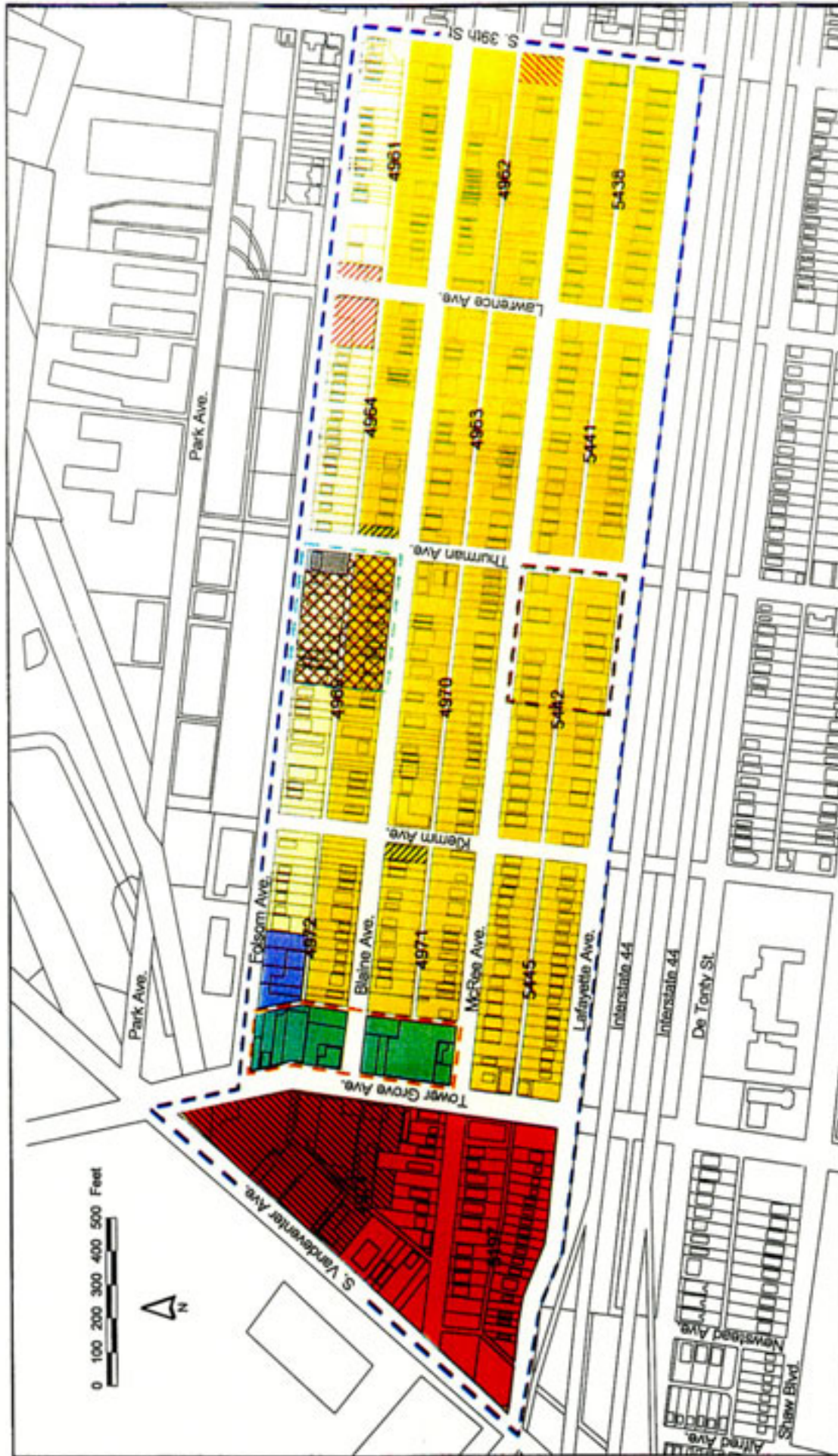
it is proposed that the McRee Town South Neighborhood Plan and the McRee Town Redevelopment Plan replace any existing neighborhood plans and redevelopment plans for the Neighborhood Area, including the Samuel McRee (I-44) Redevelopment Plan, the portion of the Midtown Medical Center Redevelopment Plan that exists west of 39<sup>th</sup> Street, the Vandeventer/McRee Plan, and the plan for 4351 Lafayette Avenue.

Despite the disinvestment that has occurred within the Neighborhood Area, it has a number of assets which, if properly capitalized on, can form the foundation for the successful redevelopment of McRee Town. The assets include:

1. **Stable Neighboring Development**—The Neighborhood Area is surrounded by stable neighboring development. To the west and north are well-established warehouse and manufacturing uses. To the east is the Tiffany neighborhood, where significant rehabilitation has occurred as part of the Midtown Medical Center Neighborhood Area. To the south is I-44 and the balance of the Garden District.
2. **Good Interstate and Local Access**—I-44, which runs along the southern edge of the Neighborhood Area, provides excellent access to downtown St. Louis, as well the entire St. Louis region. The recent creation of a full diamond interchange at Vandeventer Avenue significantly enhances the attractiveness of the Neighborhood Area for both residential and non-residential development.

Vandeventer Avenue, which forms the western boundary of the Neighborhood Area, is a major north-south arterial in the City of St. Louis ("City"). Also, Kingshighway Boulevard is only a short distance to the west of the Neighborhood Area and Grand Boulevard a short distance to the east. Both Kingshighway Boulevard and Grand Boulevard are major north-south arterials within the City.

3. **Proximity to Major Institutional and Employment Centers**—The Neighborhood Area is close to a number of major employment centers and institutions. Downtown is approximately 2 miles to the northeast. The Washington University Medical Center, which is the largest single employer in the City of St. Louis, is approximately 1 mile to the northwest. The Saint Louis University Medical Center is located immediately to the northeast. The main campus of Saint Louis University is located approximately 1 mile



# McRee Town - South Neighborhood Plan

## Land Use Plan

- Residential
- Residential or Optional Institution
- Residential with Optional Commercial
- Residential with Optional Open Space
- Residential or Optional Manufacturing
- Proposed Elderly Housing
- Alternative Elderly Housing
- Manufacturing

- Utility
- Office/Research or Optional Existing Manufacturing
- Optional Office/Research
- Proposed Community Center Location
- Alternative Community Center Location
- Planning Area



3. **Create Opportunity for New Elderly Housing**—A site will be prepared and made available for the construction of a new rental multi-family residential project for occupancy by elderly households. The block bounded by Blaine Avenue, Klemm Avenue, Folsom Avenue, and Thurman Avenue is the prime candidate for the construction of this project for the elderly (see Exhibit 6). Alternatively, this new elderly housing may be developed in the block bounded by Lafayette Avenue, Klemm Avenue, McRee Avenue, and Thurman Avenue. If adequate funds cannot be obtained for the construction of elderly housing, or if the project is not financially feasible, the area considered for elderly housing can be developed for new housing that is consistent with the plan for neighboring development.
4. **Reinforce Existing Viable Businesses Along Tower Grove Avenue**- Provided it is economically viable and willing to make necessary investments in improvements to its property, the Kasco Corporation could be retained.
5. **Create Opportunities for New Office, Manufacturing, and Research and Development Facilities**- The portion of the Neighborhood Area to the south of Kasco Corp. and west of Tower Grove Avenue should be cleared to make way for new office, manufacturing, and be technology based businesses and institutions. It is proposed that McRee Avenue could be vacated between Tower Grove Avenue and Vandeventer Avenue to create a larger, consolidated site for this development. This site could be expanded to the north if the Kasco Corp. decides to close or relocate. Likewise the sites occupied by businesses along the east side of Tower Grove Avenue should be consolidated and made available for new business opportunities (redevelopment or rehab), if this area is not utilized for the construction of a community center.

6. **Create Recreation Opportunities for Garden District Neighborhoods**—It is proposed that a small community recreation center serving the Garden District be created within the Neighborhood Area. Two alternative locations are identified for the possible construction of a community center. The first is the portion of the block or blocks bounded by McRee Avenue, Tower Grove Avenue, Folsom Avenue, and the alley to the east of Tower Grove Avenue. An alternative location is the block bounded by Thurman Avenue, Blaine Avenue, Klemm Avenue, and Folsom Avenue. Other sites or locations may be studied as this plan evolves.

## OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

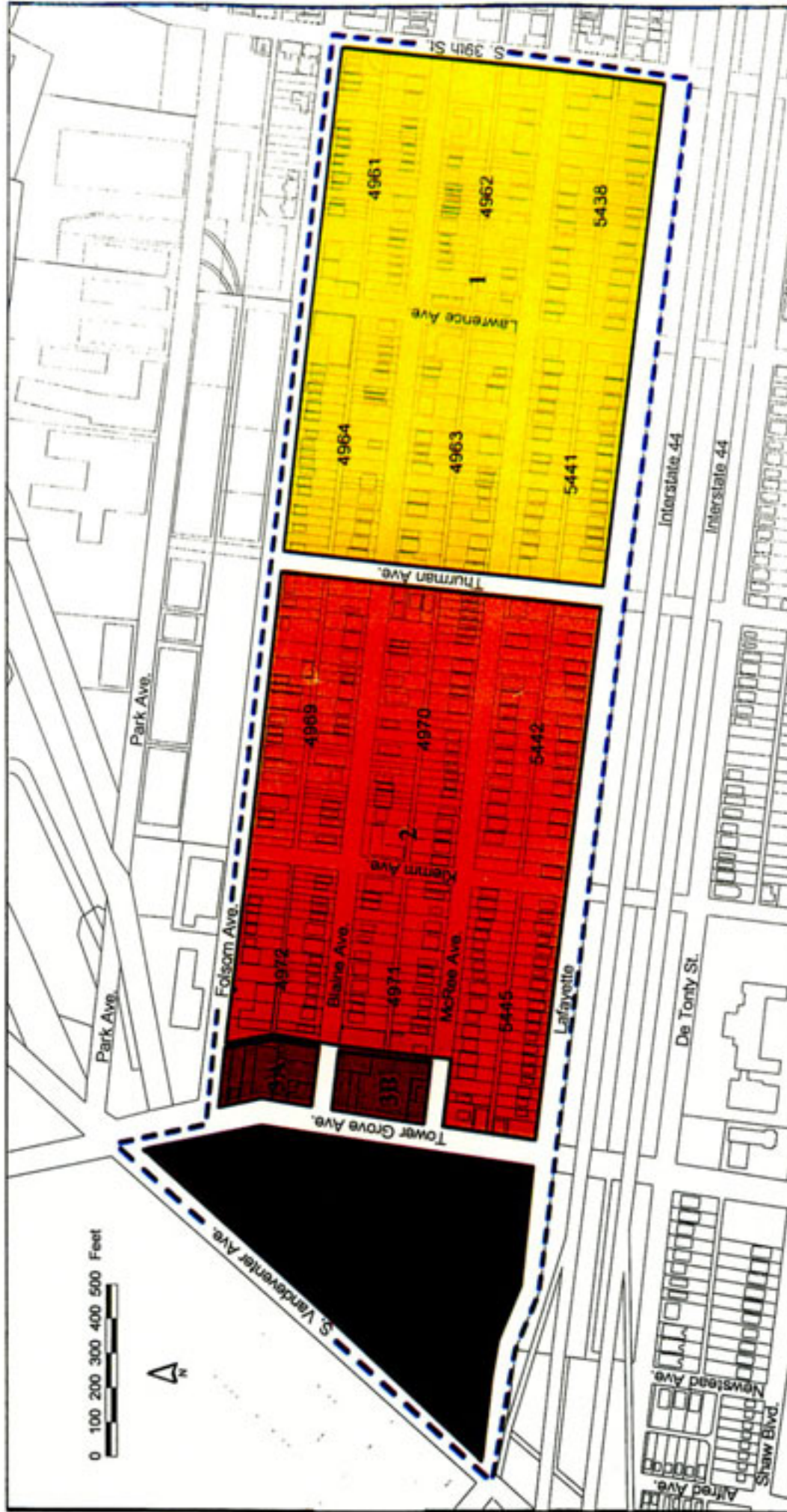
The Neighborhood Plan consists of a series of interrelated actions. The resulting series of development projects are referenced to Exhibit 7 (Project Areas). These, in turn, are briefly summarized below and in the accompanying Exhibit 6 (Land Use Plan), and Exhibit 8 (Primary Action) in terms of their physical and functional interrelationships.

**Project Area 1—City Blocks 4961,4962,4963,4964,5438, and 5441:** These blocks shall be assembled and cleared primarily to accommodate the construction of new attached or detached single-family residences.

**Project Area 2—City Blocks 4969,4970,4971 (eastern portion), 4972 (eastern portion), 5442 and 5445:** Viable owner-occupied residences are to be retained and rehabilitated. In addition, existing viable non-owner occupied single-family structures and existing multi-family structures may be reconfigured and rehabilitated for owner-occupancy, if feasible. New elderly housing is proposed for a portion of City Block 4969, with City Block 5442 serving as an alternative location, provided sufficient funds can be secured for its construction and operation. The balance of structures in the project area shall be cleared for the construction of new attached or detached single-family residences.

**Project Area 3A—City Block 4972 (western portion):** This area of approximately 1 acre contains vacant land and vacant structures in fair to poor condition. The area should be cleared of existing structures to allow for construction of a new community center, provided sufficient funds can be secured for its construction and operation. If the community center is not constructed at this location, new office and/or research & development facilities could be built.





# McRee Town - South Neighborhood Plan

## Project Areas

-- Planning Area

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**Project Area 3B—City Block 4971 (western portion):** This area of approximately 1 acre contains a mixture of vacant land, vacant buildings and a small hardware store. The area should be cleared as part of a development of a new community center or the construction of new office and/or research & development facilities. By vacating Blaine Avenue, between Project Area 3A and 3B it would be possible to create one larger project area containing roughly 2.3 acres.

**Project Area 4A—City Blocks 5197 and 4974 (southern portion), including McRee Avenue right-of-way:** This area, containing roughly 8 acres, could be acquired and cleared for the construction of new office and/or research facilities. Depending on the specific development proposed for this Project Area, the McRee Avenue right-of-way could be vacated and incorporated into the overall development.

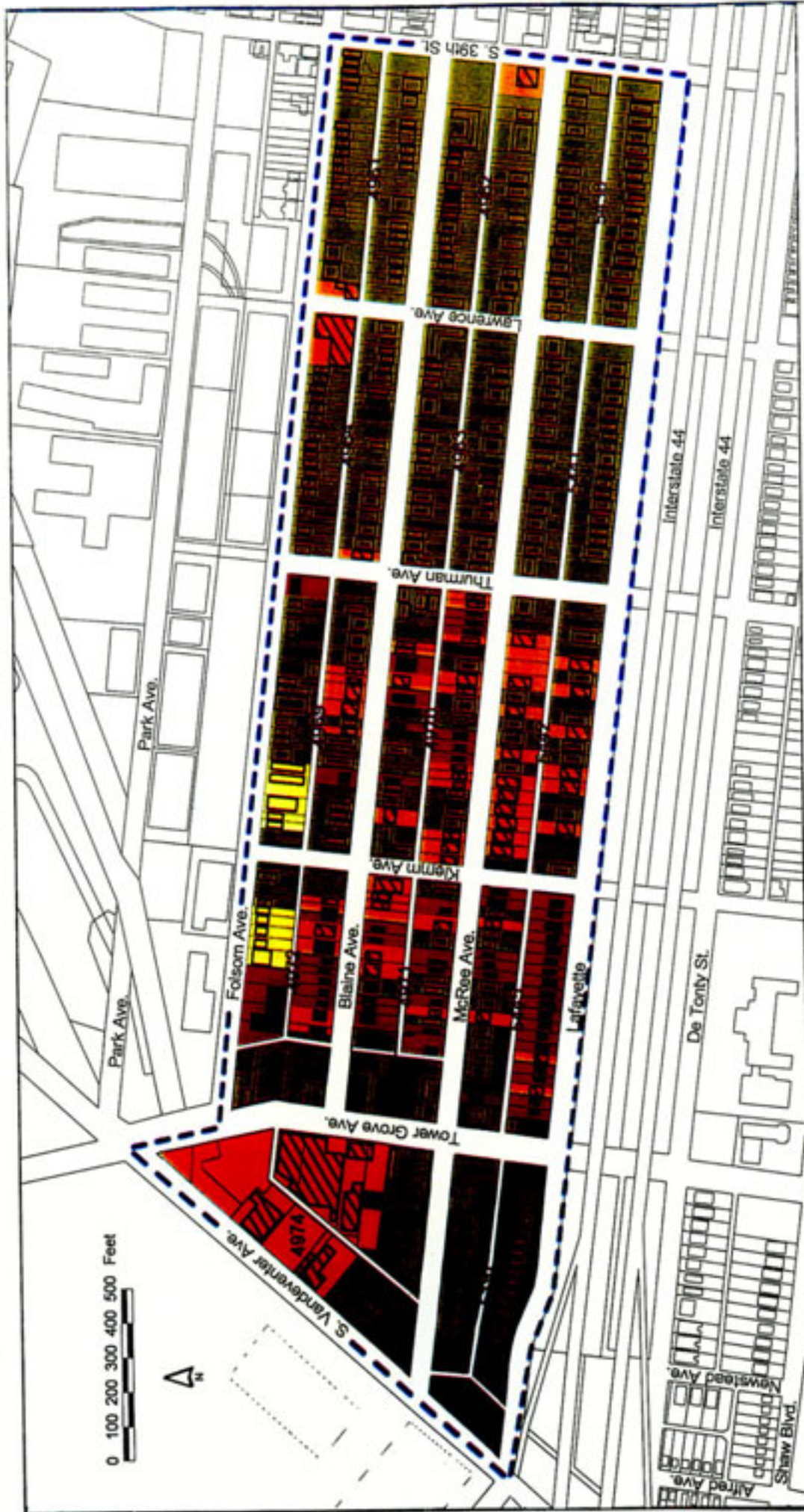
**Project Area 4B—City Block 4974 (northern portion):** The facilities of the Kasco Corporation currently occupy this portion of the Neighborhood Area. It is assumed that Kasco will remain and continue to improve their facilities. However, if Kasco closes or relocates, the 4 acres comprising this project area should be added to the developable land of Project Area 4A to create a redevelopment with a combined area of 12 acres.

## **STRUCTURES DESIGNATED FOR REHABILITATION**

The structures which have been designated for rehabilitation are shown on Exhibit 8 (Primary Actions) and are listed by city block and lot number in Appendix II. A general description of each Project Area (see Exhibit 7) is summarized below:

**Project Area 1:** Four structures, which are currently used for manufacturing, commercial/residential, and institutional uses, could be retained as part of the redevelopment program for this project area.





# McRee Town - South Neighborhood Plan

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EXHIBIT 8

## Primary Actions

- Area Action**
- Conservation
  - New Rehabilitation or Construction
  - New Construction
  - Interim Retention
  - Planning Area
- Building Action**
- Building to Remain
  - Optional Building to Remain
  - Building to be Removed
- September 2001

**Project Area 2:** It is estimated that between 53 and 103 of the structures in this project area can be retained and rehabilitated for single-family or duplex owner occupancy. In addition, two structures, which are currently used for manufacturing and public utility purposes, may be retained and rehabilitated.

**Project Area 4B:** As long as the Kasco Corporation remains at its present location, it is anticipated that its existing facilities will be retained and rehabilitated. If Kasco is no longer in business at this location, the existing structures should be demolished to provide for new development opportunities.

## **NEW DEVELOPMENT**

The Neighborhood Plan proposes a variety of types of new construction to address the residential and business needs of the Neighborhood Area. The sites that have been designated for new construction are shown on Exhibit 8 and are listed by city block and lot number in Appendix II. A general description of such Projects, as shown in Exhibit 6, is summarized below:

**Project Area 1:** It is proposed that this Project Area be primarily redeveloped with new detached and/or attached, single-family residential units. The new residential area could incorporate a small passive recreation area and playground for use by the residents of the entire Neighborhood Area, as well as a proposed buffer along the south side of Folsom Avenue.

It is assumed that the existing street pattern of development will primarily be retained for Project Area 1. However, some flexibility should be allowed, particularly for the portion of the Project Area between Blaine Avenue and Folsom Avenue, where residential units facing Folsom Avenue should be avoided.

There are a little over 25 acres of land within Project Area 1, exclusive of existing rights-of-way. Assuming that there is a buffer created along the south side of Folsom Avenue in order to mitigate potential conflicts between the new residential uses and existing industrial uses on the north side of Folsom, the available acreage for development would be reduced somewhat to between 21 and 23 acres.



If one to two acres are set aside for a passive neighborhood open space/park, the remaining 19 to 22 acres will support roughly 120 to 175 new single-family units, assuming a density of approximately 6 to 8 units per acre.

**Project Area 2:** The construction of infill owner occupied attached and detached single-family residential units is proposed for approximately half of the Neighborhood Area that is not scheduled for conservation and rehabilitation. It is estimated that approximately 90 new single-family infill units will be constructed along Blaine Avenue, McRee Avenue, and Lafayette Avenue. This new infill development should be compatible with the massing and character of the existing single-family and two-family residential units in the Project Area.

New elderly housing is proposed for approximately half of the block bounded by Blaine Avenue, Klemm Avenue, Folsom Avenue, and Thurman Avenue. This amount of land could support roughly 100 to 150 elderly housing units in a three to four-story building. An alternative location for elderly housing is the block bounded by Lafayette Avenue, Klemm Avenue, McRee Avenue, and Thurman Avenue.

**Project Area 3A and 3B:** The property bounded by McRee Avenue to the south, Tower Grove Avenue to the west, Folsom Avenue to the north, and the alley (approximately 175 feet east of Tower Grove), is proposed to be redeveloped for a new community recreation center. Alternatively all or part of these Project Areas could be used for new office, manufacturing, and/or research & development facilities.

**Project Area 4A and 4B:** The property bounded by Tower Grove Avenue on the east, Lafayette Avenue on the south, Vandeventer Avenue on the west, and Kasco Corporation property on the north, should be redeveloped for new office, manufacturing, and research & development facilities. This area encompasses approximately 8 acres, including the McRee Avenue right-of-way. If Kasco would decide to relocate, the redeveloped area should be expanded by approximately 4 acres.

## **CHARACTER OF PROPOSED DWELLINGS**

The Neighborhood Plan calls for the continuation or introduction of residential uses within the Neighborhood Area with respect to all or portions of Project Areas 1 and 2.

It is anticipated that approximately 215 new single-family units will be constructed in Project Areas 1 and 2. This is in addition to the 150 single-family or duplex conversion units that are proposed for rehabilitation and conservation. The plan also anticipates the construction of approximately 150 new residential units for the elderly. Thus, in total, approximately 540 residential units will be available for occupancy in the Neighborhood Area.

## **CONFORMANCE WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

This Neighborhood Plan conforms with the St. Louis Comprehensive Plan of 1947. The 1947 Plan identified and recommended that the McRee Town area be retained as residential. Similarly, this Neighborhood Plan retains the Neighborhood Area as residential. However, the portion of the neighborhood west of Tower Grove Avenue is comprised of approximately 12 acres. Over the years, a sizable amount of this area has been transformed into industrial use. This Plan recommends that the remaining residential be combined with the existing industrial uses to form a developable office, commercial or light industrial site.

## **CAPITAL & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS, LANDSCAPING AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS**

The Neighborhood Plan proposes the following specific community improvements in order to improve the general attractiveness and appearance of the Neighborhood Area, as well as to enhance property value for residents, homeowners, and businesses:

**Capital & Infrastructure Improvements--** The infrastructure upgrades contemplated are designed to provide the Neighborhood Area with a combination of functional and attractive improvements. Phase 1 of the neighborhood plan calls for the creation of up to 150 new homes. Given this level of investment and subject to available funding, a major infrastructure program will be instituted to complement the housing development. These improvements could include improved streets, the replacement of or installation of new sidewalks, curbs and gutters, and street lighting. Additionally, fencing, signage, entrance monuments, landscaping and plantings will also be developed to complement the new construction.



Other possible infrastructure could be put in place that will service the neighborhood but will not be seen. For instance, sewer lines will be upgraded and potentially re-routed. Utility upgrades are being contemplated which will include locating electric lines underground thereby, removing all overhead lines.

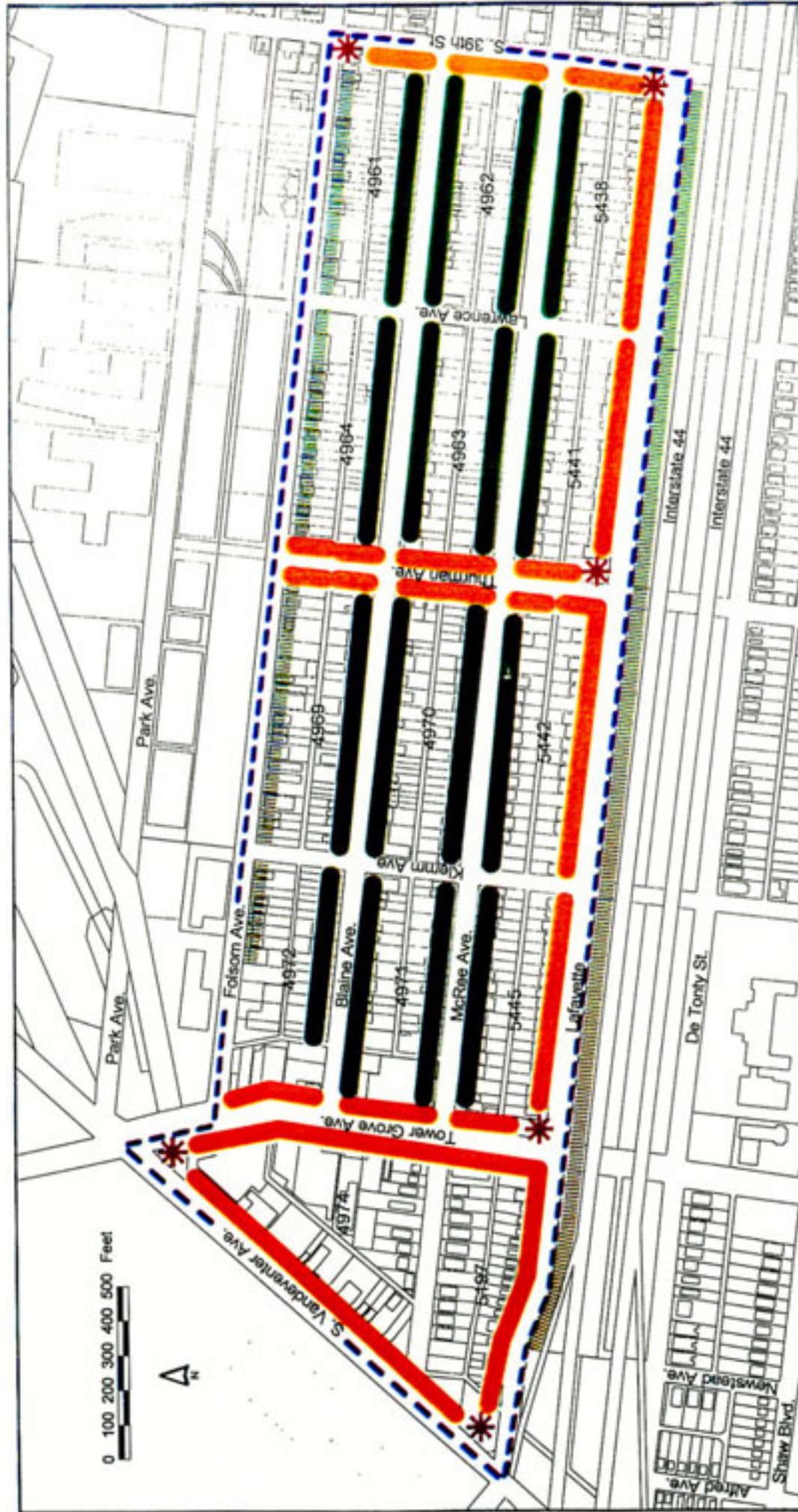
New housing construction coupled with the infrastructure improvements and beautification plans will create a sense of quality and a neighborhood that is a desirable place to live.

**General Streetscape Improvements--** A series of improvements to the vehicular and pedestrian environment are contemplated for implementation within the public rights-of-way of the Neighborhood Area (see Exhibit 9). Special attention is to be given to improvements in the following locations:

- Vandeventer Avenue between I-44 and Tower Grove Avenue
- Tower Grove Avenue between I-44 and Vandeventer Avenue
- Thurman Avenue between I-44 and Folsom Avenue
- 39<sup>th</sup> Street between I-44 and Folsom Avenue
- Lafayette Avenue between Vandeventer and 39<sup>th</sup> Street

**Folsom Avenue Buffer--** A landscaped buffer may be provided between the manufacturing and warehouse facilities north of Folsom Avenue and the existing and new residential to the south of Folsom Avenue. The intent of this buffer is to provide adequate distance and screening to avoid potential conflicts between the appearance and operations of the businesses north of Folsom and the residences to the south. It is the responsibility of the developers of the new residences to south of Folsom Avenue to implement the design and construction of this open space and landscaped buffer. The exact size and character of the open space buffer will be determined by the type, orientation and siting of the new residences to the south of Folsom Avenue.

**Interstate 44 Landscape Buffer--** It is desirable to provide additional landscaping between the south side of Lafayette Avenue and I-44 to help screen and buffer the residences along Lafayette Avenue from the impact of I-44. This should be extended by means of a partnership of the City, The Missouri Department of Transportation, and the developers of properties on the north side of Lafayette and facing I-44.



## McRee Town - South Neighborhood Plan

## Open Space and Landscape Plan

- \* Entry Feature
- ▨ Landscaped Buffer
- ▨ Special Landscape Treatment
- Street Trees

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EXHIBIT 9

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Redevelopment Corporation and a "projects pass through" for the abatement of real property taxes for individual development projects undertaken pursuant to a separate document known as the Mcree Town Redevelopment Plan and in accordance with appropriate Parcel Development Agreements. This activity shall be coordinated and executed consistent with the requirements of the Office of the Assessor of the City of St. Louis. Tax abatement may be used as an incentive for attracting and making feasible the type and quality of private investment planned within the Neighborhood Area.

In addition to these roles, the Redevelopment Corporation will pursue and assess various opportunities for financial and program assistance. As an umbrella redevelopment corporation, it will pursue and promote the use of federal and state tax incentives and federal, state, and local financial assistance programs. It is noted to date that the Federal Government has committed \$2,850,000 of HUD funds, the Danforth Foundation has committed \$1,500,000 and \$3,000,000 has been committed from the Missouri Botanical Garden. Also, the city has committed \$3,000,000 over a four year period.

Another activity central to the operations will be to acquire and/or assist in the acquisition and holding of property for sale to developers of strategic properties. This will be accomplished primarily through a pooling of private funds in a revolving acquisition fund.

Finally, the Redevelopment Corporation will work closely with the city in refining and implementing an appropriate public improvements program for the Neighborhood Area.

## **STAGING OF DEVELOPMENT**

It is the intent to move ahead with all project areas at the same time as expeditiously as possible. To allow for potential fluctuations in market absorption, the proposed redevelopment of all project areas will be completed within ten years.

## **PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES**

The Neighborhood Area contains a range of zoning designations which include: "C" Multiple-Family Dwelling District, "D" Multiple-Family District, "F" Neighborhood Commercial District, "G" Local Commercial and Office District, and "J" Industrial District ( See Exhibit 10, Existing and Proposed Zoning).

**Neighborhood Open Space/Park--** It is proposed that a passive park and low intensity recreation area or playground be considered within Project Area 1 and/or Area 2. The park/playground would be for the use of all residents within the McRee Town Neighborhood Area. It is estimated that this neighborhood amenity could require approximately one acre. The option should be maintained to have this park/open space privately, but commonly, owned and maintained by the property owners and residents as part of the new residential development in the Neighborhood Area.

**Community Recreation Center--** Provision is made for the potential development of a community recreation center to serve the residents of the larger Garden District. The programs and activities offered at the center could be coordinated with the programs and activities offered at the community center, which is under construction in the Forest Park southeast neighborhood. Two alternative locations have been identified for this facility- the western ends of City Blocks 4971 and 4972 in Project Areas 3A and 3B or City Block 4969 in Project Area 2. If adequate funding cannot be obtained to construct the community recreation center within three years of adoption of the Plan, the anticipated sites can be used for expansion of the primary land use intended for these Project Areas, consistent with the Redevelopment Plan.

With the above discussed infrastructure improvements, the McRee Town Neighborhood will be greatly enhanced. These infrastructure improvements will create a safer and more pedestrian friendly environment. Residents will find the neighborhood better lit, more accessible and aesthetically appealing due to the landscaping, fencing and other pedestrian scale improvements.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION ORGANIZATION**

The McRee Town Redevelopment Corporation has formulated an implementation strategy suited both to its role and to the objectives for the Neighborhood Area. The first component of this strategy is the promotion of the Neighborhood Area to enhance its image.

A second major dimension of the Redevelopment Corporation's role is to solicit, review, select, and assist developers and builders implement individual plan elements.

The third major role of the Redevelopment Corporation is to serve as an "umbrella"





# McRee Town - South Neighborhood Plan

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EXHIBIT 10

## Existing and Proposed Zoning

- Revised "A" Single-Family (Includes Attached Single-Family)
- Proposed "J" Industrial
- "C" Multiple-Family
- "D" Multiple-Family
- "F" Neighborhood Commercial
- "G" Local Commercial
- "J" Industrial
- Planning Area
- September 2001

It is proposed that the basic underlying zoning for Project Areas 1 and 2 be changed to a modified "A" Single-Family District that would also accommodate attached single-family housing. This could be accomplished by making attached single-family housing on deeded lots a conditional use of the "A" Single-Family District, or by creating a new attached single-family zoning district.

The "C" Multiple-Family or "D" Multiple-Family zoning should be provided for the portion of the Neighborhood Area where elderly housing is constructed. The exact limits of this area will be determined as the plans for the elderly housing are finalized.

Mixed use development with ground floor commercial and residential above should be considered for structures fronting on 39<sup>th</sup> Street, Thurman Avenue, and Tower Grove Avenue on a case-by-case basis.

It is proposed that Project Areas 3A, 3B, 4A, and 4B be zoned "J" Industrial District. However, the uses in these Project Areas should be restricted to office, research & development facilities, or light manufacturing typically found in a contemporary "business park." A community center should be allowed in Project Areas 3A and 3B. In the event that individual variance requests become appropriate, applications shall be filed by individual developers on a project-by-project basis as needed and by the Redevelopment Corporation as deemed appropriate in order to effectuate the Redevelopment Plan.

Once the Plan has been approved and accepted, the Redevelopment Corporation intends to seek appropriate rezoning of those portions or areas of the Plan consistent with City procedures and regulations.



## **STREET AND CIRCULATION CHANGES**

The Neighborhood Plan anticipates the closing and vacation of McRee Avenue between Tower Grove Avenue on the east and Vandeventer Avenue on the west (see Exhibit 11).

Depending on the final site plan for new housing in the Project Area 1, it may be desirable to close or vacate other streets and alleys.

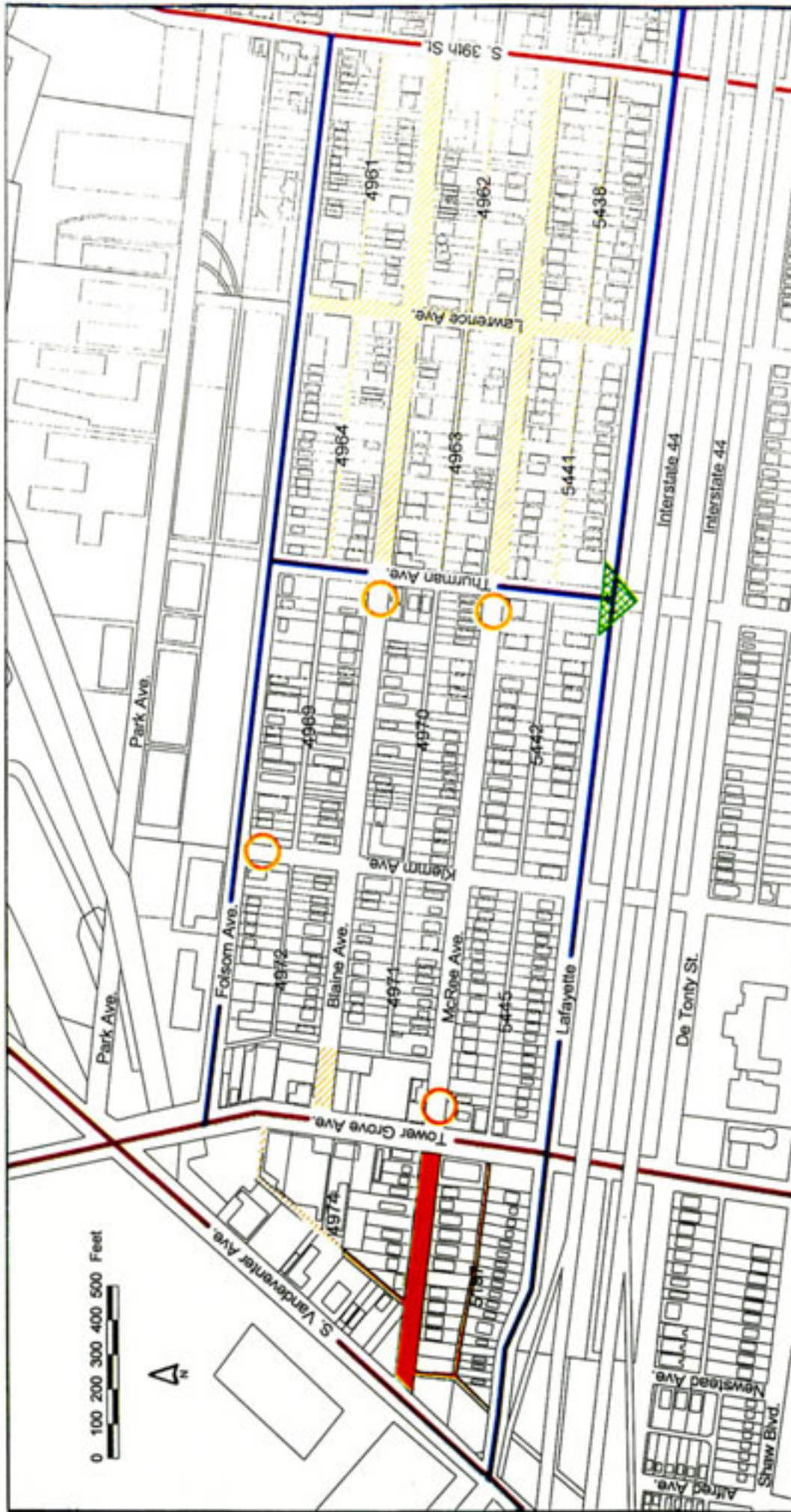
Within Project Area 2, consideration should be given to closing of McRee Avenue and Blaine Avenue at Thurman Avenue and/or Vandeventer Avenue, and Klemm Avenue at Folsom Avenue, Thurman Avenue is currently closed to the south of Lafayette Avenue. Consideration should be given to reopening Thurman Avenue when there is adequate redevelopment and investment in the area between DeTonty Avenue and Shaw Boulevard to provide an attractive, stable, and contemporary residential environment.

Streets within the Neighborhood Area, may be privatized dependant on the concurrence of the property owners on the street.

## **ANALYSIS OF URBAN DESIGN**

The Neighborhood Area has been declining physically, socially and economically for thirty years. The physical decline is evidenced by the overwhelming amount of vacant lots, abandoned buildings and dilapidated but occupied structures. The area has a majority of multi-family brick structures of varying ages and architecture, however, so much has been removed, that to discuss a consistent type of building or to define a sense of urban fabric would be difficult.

Since this area is a residential neighborhood, there are no substantial institutional or commercial buildings. However, on the perimeter streets there are 2-story buildings that once housed small neighborhood convenience stores such as a hardware store or cleaners, which also had residential facilities on the second floor. As of today, a majority of those multi-use buildings are vacant and boarded-up. However, one or two of these type buildings are still in existence today. Their use is generally as a small overpriced food/convenience store type operation.



# McRee Town - South Neighborhood Plan

## Circulation Plan

- Major Arterial Street
- Local Access Street
- Street/Alley Closure
- Optional Street/Alley Vacation
- Optional Street Closure
- Optional Street Reopening

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There are areas within the Neighborhood Area (mostly west of Thurman Ave.) where there is a semblance of a uniform built environment, dominated by two and four-family buildings constructed in the 1930's.

The street pattern in the Neighborhood Area is a typical grid of streets running north and south as well as east and west, although the east-west streets are considerably longer than the north-south streets creating a Neighborhood Area that is rectangular in shape. None of the area streets have ever been upgraded to include any green space or landscaping. As a typical urban neighborhood, alleys run throughout the area. The alleys are in poor condition, filled with trash and overgrown with encroaching trees and weeds from unkempt residential lots. Sidewalks are common throughout the area, however they are generally in poor condition.

To the east of the Neighborhood Area is the Tiffany neighborhood, which experienced a coordinated revitalization effort in the early 1980's. Similar to the Neighborhood Area, the Tiffany neighborhood also has a majority of mostly 2-story brick multi-family buildings.

To the north of the Neighborhood Area is a heavy concentration of industrial property and manufacturing facilities. In order to create a more attractive development site, the redevelopment plan calls for using the northern most residential street (Folsom) as a buffer between the proposed new development and the industrial users to the north.

The Neighborhood Area is bounded by Vandeventer Avenue on the west. Vandeventer Ave. is a major thoroughfare connecting the Neighborhood Area to the north and south. There are a number of large and small businesses located on Vandeventer Ave. in buildings that appear as though they have undergone numerous modifications. Vandeventer Ave. has a potential to be an attractive and viable commercial street with some targeted streetscape improvements.

Highway 44 borders the Neighborhood Area on the south. When constructed, the highway effectively cut off the Neighborhood Area from the rest of the neighborhood to the south. Many streets now dead-end at the highway, making for awkward vehicular circulation and poor aesthetic appeal.

The proposed redevelopment plan anticipates a number of changes to the existing conditions, which will help provide for better circulation, less confusion and a more attractive streetscape.

As a final note, the McRee Town Neighborhood is registered as a National Historic District known as Tiffany Neighborhood District. What is now known as the Tiffany Neighborhood is not part of the historic district. Our recommendation is to decertify McRee Town as a historic district.

## **FUNDING PROPERTY ACQUISITION, RELOCATION, AND DEMOLITION**

The following table summarizes the anticipated costs for acquisition, relocation, and demolition (as indicated elsewhere in this document) of those properties believed to be critical and strategic to the Neighborhood Plan

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Acquisition</b>	<b>\$ 6,269,000</b>
<b>Relocation</b>	<b>\$ 4,357,000</b>
<b>Demolition, Environmental and site preparation</b>	<b>\$ 4,573,000</b>
<b>Interest Expense Rate</b>	<b>\$ 638,193</b>
<b>Soft Cost (Legal, brokerage, etc.)</b>	<b>\$ 337,807</b>
<b>Contingency (unanticipated site development costs)</b>	<b>\$ 5,000,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$21,175,000</b>

Thus far, the following indicated commitments for funds that would be used to cover the above costs:

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Danforth Foundation</b>	<b>\$ 1,000,000</b>
<b>Missouri Botanical Garden</b>	<b>\$ 3,000,000</b>
<b>City Funds</b>	<b>\$ 3,000,000</b>
<b>Federal Government (HUD appropriation)</b>	<b>\$ 2,850,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 9,850,000</b>



## **ACQUISITION OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTY**

The Neighborhood Plan anticipates the acquisition of all City-owned property, including property owned by the Land Reutilization Authority within in the Neighborhood Area

## **ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY**

The major emphasis of this redevelopment effort is focused on creating new housing. Therefore, there is no anticipated recruitment or development of industrial type uses that would create adverse environmental conditions such as air, noise or water pollution. However, the fourth and final phase of the redevelopment plan focuses on development of new office and/or research facilities. This phase of the project is located at the far western edge of the Neighborhood Area and is bisected from the housing areas by Tower Grove Avenue.

In regard to the existing environmental conditions, a preliminary analysis indicates that there are five (5) sites within the Neighborhood Area that once were active gas/filling stations. Upon acquisition of these sites (as well as other sites which may have potential environmental issues) an assessment will be undertaken to determine if any environmental remediation needs to take place. If so, the remediation work will be conducted by a licensed environmental remediation firm in accordance with all federal, state and local regulations.

## **ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

The data in this section summarizes a series of analyses of projected private investments within the Neighborhood Area to illustrate the economic impact of the development on the City of St. Louis.

The anticipated new investment pursuant to this Neighborhood Plan is estimated to be nearly \$ 60 million. Public revenues generated during the 25 years of the plan will total an estimated \$18.4 million. This is \$10.1 million more than the existing development would generate during the same period.

In addition, it is estimated that the proposed development will create 235 one-year full time construction jobs at an estimated average annual salary of \$40,000.